



Location Affordability Portal
July 16, 2014
Loudermilk Center, Atlanta

Panel 2: Strategic Investment and Leveraging Existing Assets

Panelists:

Douglas Hooker, Atlanta Regional Commission
Keith Parker, MARTA
Odetta MacLeish-White, Enterprise Community Partners
Lee May, DeKalb County
Deborah Scott, Georgia STAND-UP

The below comments are highlights from the second panel of the Location Affordability Portal Version 2 Pre-Launch.

Deborah Scott: We should talk about people policy, not public policy and this tool can shift this.

Douglas Hooker: How can employers use this to think about their employees?

Deborah Scott: You can use it in reverse to see where employees are. Employers (job centers) can subsidize costs by providing a worker bus for example. Workers need to be creative with community. Can church buses get people to job centers? Sure, we can train people for jobs but if they can't get there, how useful is it? It is unaffordable to be poor. It's the haves vs. the have-nots. We need to look at the reality of what our region looks like.

Keith Parker: 63 cents per capita annually is what is spent on housing and transportation in Atlanta. MARTA is the largest system in the nation with no funding. Private investors are not stepping up. The recent Developers Day was great to talk about plans for transit-oriented development (TOD). A lot of times we need to show people and incentivize them to come in.

Odetta MacLeish-White: This is an inclusionary housing strategy analyzer, a data tool that compares ROI that the developer wants to achieve. We need to push and be courageous about what we want and expect from public and private sectors.

Deborah Scott: Pension dollars are available for people to invest if we allow them to do that. Right now, only 2% of dollars are spent here because the policy is not in place to allow for that to come here. We need to get leverage for workers and worker centers and workers money which is pension money. We can invest our pension dollars in a specified TOD location (i.e. Kensington station).



Edward Jennings Jr.: We need to make it sexy to ride MARTA again. Keith is doing a good job of making it safe and secure. How do we promote our employees to ride MARTA? Leadership especially should be riding MARTA. Race issues are what they are, just as they were years ago.

Keith Parker: I'm the first CEO to actually use the system. We are investing in WiFi on the buses, putting cell connectivity in the stations and updating signage in the stations. You can get real-time info on times of buses to your cell. Also implementing mobile paying (no need for a Breezecard) MARTA is one of the safest systems in the nation but people don't know it. American Transportation System did a study on what a family of 4 can save by giving up a car – its \$9,600 a year in Atlanta by switching to public transit – \$800 a month, which is especially meaningful for low-income families.

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